REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-6, and 8-16 are pending in the patent application. The Examiner has rejected Claim 9 under 35 USC 112; Claims 1, 4, 6, 10, 14, and 16 under 35 USC 102 as anticipated by Burgess; Claims 8 and 11-12 under 35 USC 103 as unpatentable over Burgess in view of Salas; Claims 3, 13 and 15 under 35 USC 103 as unpatentable over Burgess in view of Peters; Claim 9 as unpatentable over Burgess and Salas in view of Peters; and, Claim 5 as unpatentable over Burgess in view of Sato.

Claim 9 has been amended to change the dependency and therefore provide appropriate antecedent basis for the term "updated document". In addition, Claim 17 has been added to depend from Claim 6 and recite a parallel limitation as is recited in Claim 9. The language of the independent claims, Claims 1, 6, and 10, has been amended in accordance with the Examiner's comments, as is further detailed below. Based on the amendments presented herein, and for the reasons set forth below, Applicant respectfully contends that the claims as amended are patentable over the cited art.

The present application teaches and claims a system and apparatus for automatically determining, updating, and

indicating user access status for each of a plurality of users of collaborative groupware software, the user access status indicating whether the user has accessed each document and being viewable by all of the users of the groupware. The invention includes means and steps for tracking user access status and displaying the user access status for every user in a status row bar in a view window at the display of each user of each document of the groupware. All users of the groupware can check the user status for all other users of each of the documents accessible via the collaborative groupware software.

In the **Remarks** section of the Office Action, the Examiner has indicated that "[t]he claims limitations do not read where multiple uses read each others' user access status." Applicant has amended the claim language to more explicitly recite that user access status for every user is viewable by all of the plurality of users of the groupware. Applicant believes that the claims as amended are patentable over the cited art.

The Burgess patent is the primary reference cited against the pending claims. The Burgess patent is directed to a system and method for a single user to check whether or not he has read a file. Burgess provides a user bitmap

which comprises a snapshot of each file with a bitmap code (i.e., a file status indicator) which tells the user whether or not he has read a file. The Burgess user can only view file status for his own files.

Applicant respectfully asserts that the Burgess patent does not anticipate the invention as claimed. Burgess provides a user bitmap accessible only by the user for viewing his or her access to files stored at the user's own computer system. Burgess neither teaches nor suggests groupware, multiple users accessing the user's files, user status for multiple users of the same file, or user access status being viewable by multiple users. As amended, all of the claims include the limitation that user access status for every user of each document of groupware is viewable by all of the plurality of users of the groupware. Further, there is no teaching or suggestion in Burgess of a system which automatically tracks, updates, and displays user access status for every one of multiple users of groupware documents and which provides that information for viewing by all of the plurality of users.

It is well established under U. S. Patent Law that, for a reference to anticipate claim language under 35 USC 102, that reference must teach each and every claim feature.

Since the Burgess patent does not teach groupware, does not teach maintaining, updating and displaying user access status for every one of a plurality of users of groupware, and does not teach displaying user access status for viewing by all of the users of groupware, it cannot be maintained that the Burgess patent anticipates the invention as recited in independent Claims 1, 6, and 10 and those claimed which depend therefrom.

The Examiner has additionally cited the Salas, Peters, and Sato patents in rejecting the language of the remaining claims which depend from Claims 1, 6 and 10. Applicant respectfully asserts that none of the cited references teaches or suggests those claim features which are missing from the Burgess patent, as further detailed below.

The Salas patent is directed to tracking user access to shareware, which is available to users for testing and/or demonstration. Salas teaches, in the cited passage from Col. 5, lines 43-49, that an item box will include an item's version, indicating whether an item has been changed. There is nothing in the Salas teachings that states or suggests that the Salas system automatically tracks, updates, and displays/notifies users of changes. Nor is there any teaching or suggestion in Salas that user access status is

maintained for every one of a plurality of individual users. Rather, when shareware is posted for access by users, it is posted with an item box that indicates its version, etc. as input by the individual who updated and posted the shareware. Newly posted shareware is necessarily "not read" by any user. Its item box shows document status, "not read by any user", since it is new. It does not indicate individual user access status with respect to the new version. With regard to the cited passage from Col. 12, lines 31-37, Salas teaches that a user may interact with or modify the shareware. Salas does not teach, however, that information in the item box is altered when a user interacts with or modifies the shareware. While Salas provides group, or team, access to a single user document, Salas provides no teaching or suggestion of a system or method for maintaining user access status for the document for every user of the team. Further Salas provides no teaching or suggestion of a system or method for displaying user access status for multiple users of multiple document, wherein the user access status is viewable by every user of the team. Even if one were to attempt to modify Burgess with Salas, one would arrive at a system wherein a single user could check his or her read status and could upload a document into shareware.

The combination would not, however, have any capability of determining what other users had accessed the document, let alone a capability to display user access state for viewing by all users. Applicant concludes, therefore, that the combination of Burgess and Salas does not render the claim language of Claims 8 and 11-12 unpatentable as obvious.

The Peters patent is cited for its teachings related to showing what percentage of users have read a document and for sending reminders to users who have not read a document. Peters neither teaches nor suggests that the system maintain user access status for each document for every user of groupware and that the system display that user access status for viewing by all of the users of the groupware. The Examiner has concluded that "Peters...teaches the system tracks users responses and can be used to send reminders to those who have not responded to prompt action from a few more users." Applicant fails to see how tracking user responses teaches or suggests tracking user access status. If a user accesses a document, but does not generate a response to it, neither Peters nor Burgess provides any way to maintain, update or display that information. Applicant concludes, therefore, that the combination of Burgess and

Peters does not obviate the invention as claimed in Claims 3, 13 and 15.

With respect to Claim 9, the Examiner has cited both Peters and Salas in combination with Burgess. Applicant relies on the discussions above with respect to the teachings of Burgess, Salas and Peters. The language of Claim 9, and of newly added Claim 17, expressly call for a mail generation component to send mail to members of a group who have not read a document. Since none of the cited patents teach tracking user read/access status for document for all members of a group, Applicant fails to see how the combination would obviate the invention as claimed. The Salas indication of a version number is not notification. Moreover, even though Peters can send mail to non-responding members, such is not related to reading/accessing but rather to responding. Clearly the combination would not obviate the claim language.

Finally, the Sato patent is cited for displaying status information using colors or patterns. The addition of the Sato teachings to Burgess would result in the single user read status being displayed using colors or patterns. The combination would not, however, teach or suggest the automatic tracking, updating, and displaying of user access

status indications for every user of each document accessible via collaborative groupware for viewing by all of the users. Applicant concludes, therefore, that the combination would not obviate Claim 5.

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests entry of the amendments, reconsideration of the amended claim language in light of the remarks, withdrawal of the rejections, and allowance of the claims.

Respectfully submitted,

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